

# PÊCHES & AQUACULTURE

## EN NOUVELLES

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The fishing season started several weeks ago in Québec. Seafood workers, aquaculturists and processors are working hard to provide consumers with a variety of fresh and processed products. Connoisseurs are delighted by all of the products currently available, including lobster, northern shrimp, halibut and aquaculture products.

I am very proud when I see the willingness of stakeholders in the bio-food sector, particularly the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, to contribute to expanding food autonomy in Québec.

I particularly felt this during the third annual meeting of the Bio-food Policy partners on May 19. More than 800 people were gathered for the same cause: to propel sustainable food autonomy in Québec.

Progress made on the targets set in the Bio-food Policy confirms that we are resolutely moving toward greater sustainable food autonomy. Cumulative investments in 2021 already amounted to \$12 billion, approaching the target of \$15 billion to be reached in 2025. This is well above the estimated projection of \$8.3 billion.

We are meeting our projected goals to increase the value of Québec content in bio-food products purchased in Québec, which is \$31 billion compared to the \$30.1 billion projected for 2021.

The 3% (\$321 million) increase in Québec's international bio-food exports in 2021 is largely attributable to the seafood sector, which had an impressive 42% (\$140 million) increase over 2020. We can therefore see that it is possible to promote food autonomy while continuing to export products from Québec.

The withdrawal of the snow crab fishery in the southern Gulf from the MSC certification program has unfortunately caused a decrease in the volume of certified Québec aquatic products. Last year, this sector had already exceeded its projected target of 70%. In 2021, it was 61%. I know that the industry is doing work that will allow them to reapply for eco-certification and I am confident that this will happen.

We are also making progress on implementing responsible business practices in the bio-food sector and on increasing the nutritional value of processed foods in Québec.

I am very pleased with everyone's efforts, which enable us to proclaim this enviable record.

I would like to remind you that increasing the share of marine products on the Québec market remains a priority for our government. We will continue to promote the development, competitiveness and sustainability of your industry. We will pursue actions that highlight your products, contribute to the territory's vitality and promote sustainable development.

I am pleased to see that initiatives to promote Québec marine products are continuing, notably the promotional campaign by Association Québécoise de l'Industrie de la Pêche (AQIP), as well as the regional campaigns implemented by Gaspésie Gourmande and Le Bon Goût Frais des Îles. During my recent visit to Gaspésie, I also attended an event where Metro announced that five of its stores in Gaspésie and Bas-Saint-Laurent have received Fourchette Bleue certification. I would also like to highlight the Semaine des Poissons et des Fruits de Mer, held this spring with the theme "Caught Here, Eaten Here." I would like to thank Aliments du Québec and the participating restaurants for making it possible for Québec consumers to discover Québec's marine products through this event.



Minister of Agriculture,  
Fisheries, and Food

ANDRÉ LAMONTAGNE

All these initiatives improve the visibility of Québec products among Québec consumers, which pleases me. Promotional efforts and greater networking throughout the value chain to promote Québec aquatic products will undoubtedly contribute to increasing the volume of Québec aquatic products purchased in Québec.

I wish everyone a fruitful summer, with plenty of abundance.

## GASPÉ LOBSTER, A MEDALLION OF PRIDE SINCE 2012

By **Gabrielle Lafond-Chenail**,  
Direction régionale de la Gaspésie

The Regroupement des pêcheurs professionnels du sud de la Gaspésie (RPPSG) is running a campaign to identify and promote Gaspé lobsters for the tenth consecutive year. The aim is to promote the origin, quality and durability of local lobsters, as well as to showcase the fishing community that drives this initiative in Gaspésie.

Gaspé lobsters can be traced from ocean to table, thanks to medallions placed on freshly caught specimens. Each crustacean is given a unique code associated with the fisher from the Gaspé region who caught it, which allows consumers to confirm its origin. The medallions also include the Aliments du Québec logo, which helps consumers identify Québec food products at the grocery store.

The RPPSG's campaign has become well established and receives media coverage every season. This visibility helps inform Québec consumers about the many measures adopted to ensure a sustainable fishing industry, such as obtaining eco-certification from the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), and to stimulate their interest in local aquatic products. This campaign has also raised consumer awareness of the importance of looking and asking for lobster with a clearly identified origin. This initiative has received financial support from MAPAQ since its inception.



© Credit : La Nomade Photographie

The next time you have Gaspé lobster, we suggest visiting the [monhomard.ca/en/](https://monhomard.ca/en/) website to find out its origin and to learn about the fisher who caught it!

## MINISTER LAMONTAGNE'S TOUR OF GASPÉSIE AND THE ÎLES-DE-LA-MADELEINE

By Karine Villemaire,  
Direction régionale des Îles-de-la-Madeleine

On May 6 and 7, André Lamontagne, Québec's Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPAQ), visited Bas-Saint-Laurent, Gaspésie and the Îles-de-la-Madeleine to announce new financial assistance for the biofood sector, particularly in the commercial fishing and aquaculture industries. Minister Lamontagne also participated in activities associated with the start of the fishing season.



© Credit : MAPAQ

### FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE FISHING AND AQUACULTURE INDUSTRIES

As a result of their efforts in the fishing and aquaculture industries, the biofood promotion and commercialization organizations Gaspésie Gourmande and Le bon goût frais des Îles de la Madeleine received \$90,000 in financial assistance to support their operations for the next three years. With the MAPAQ's support, these two organizations will continue to bring their regions' products to consumers across Québec.



© Credit : MAPAQ

During his stop in the Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Minister Lamontagne also highlighted the impact of the Support for the Purchase of a First Commercial Fishing Enterprise program, which distributed a total of \$775,000 to help 16 islanders launch their own businesses in 2021–2022.

Together with Diane Lebouthillier, federal Minister of National Revenue and Member of Parliament for Gaspésie–Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Minister Lamontagne also announced that Québec businesses in the fishing sector will have the possibility to access the Canadian Fish and Seafood Opportunities Fund. This \$42.8-million program aims to promote a pan-Canadian approach to addressing key market access issues, and it will also encourage opportunities to recognize and promote the Canadian fish and seafood sector's brand image.

Program link: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fisheries-peches/initiatives/opportunities-fund-fonds-initiatives/index-eng.html>.

### SETTING TRAPS

The Minister took advantage of his visit to the islands to join activities associated with the start of lobster fishing season. After attending the traditional Rendez-vous des travailleurs de la mer, a gathering of industry players and the local community, Minister Lamontagne greeted the fishing crews at the Grand-Entrée wharf as they prepared for trap-setting. In the early morning, the Minister attended the departure of the lobster boats carrying traps and witnessed the community's passion for this event.

The various activities organized by the Fondation Willie Déraspe to celebrate the 147th trap fishing season are available on La mer sur un plateau's Facebook page. The MAPAQ is proud to support this initiative, which helps showcase Québec's marine fishing.

La mer sur un plateau:  
<https://www.facebook.com/mersurunplateau>

## ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL EDITION OF THE PÊCHÉS ICI, MANGÉS ICI PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN!

By **Maryline Patterson,**

Direction des analyses et des politiques des pêches et de l'aquaculture

The Québec fishing and seafood industry has shown the potential and intention to provide the Québec population with the local products they are interested in, and the Québec government wants to help! Not only is promotion a priority in MAPAQ's 2018–2025 commercial fishing and aquaculture industry ministerial action plan, but the Québec government also wants to increase the percentage of Québec fish and seafood bought in the province by 20%. To that end, MAPAQ has run its campaign Pêchés ici, Mangés ici every year since 2016. The goal of the campaign is to promote local aquatic products in the province. It seeks to encourage Quebecers to consume more local aquatic products and to learn how to easily identify them.

For the 2022 edition, from April to June, several communications tools were leveraged, including the Semaine des poissons et des fruits de mer du Québec and a contest to win a fish and seafood meal. Advertising and influencer partnerships were also used this year.

### SEMAINE DES POISSONS ET FRUITS DE MER DU QUÉBEC

Organized in collaboration with Aliments du Québec, this year's event ran from May 26 to June 4. During this week-long event, 13 restaurants that are part of the Aliments du Québec au menu program showcased Québec fish and seafood products in their menus and dishes. Freshness, variety and quality were the week's defining features! Aliments du Québec, the participating restaurants and MAPAQ successfully promoted the event across their networks and made the Semaine a complete success.

### GAGNER UN REPAS POUR DEUX!

A contest was organized on social media to give away five meals for two during the Semaine des poissons et des fruits de mer. The contest drew about 4,000 entries and was also a resounding success.

### ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

An advertising campaign to encourage people to buy and cook Québec fish and seafood was rolled out on Facebook, Instagram, and various websites. While some ads invited people to participate in the Semaine and in the contest, others tried to show that cooking with fish and seafood is not as complicated, long and difficult as it is made out to be. Several posts by MAPAQ and by the influencers hired for the campaign proved that it is actually simple and fast to cook with these products. The influencers' interaction with the community was very effective at getting the message across.



## WORKSHOP ON IMPLEMENTING RECIRCULATING AQUACULTURE SYSTEMS IN CANADA

By **Marie-Pier Lambert et Dominic Marcotte,**

Direction régionale de l'Estuaire et des eaux intérieures

On March 9 and 10, 2022, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) held a workshop in Toronto in collaboration with the freshwater aquaculture industry. The goal of this workshop was to stimulate Canadian collaboration to address questions on the technical, biological, financial and regulatory aspects that will help encourage and promote new recirculating aquaculture systems (RASs). Aquaculture industry members from across Canada attended the workshop. Québec attendees

included representatives from DFO, the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec (MAPAQ) and Université Laval. The first session consisted of presentations on five Canadian farms that specialize in RASs, including the Ferme piscicole des Bobines Inc., in the Eastern Townships.

The workshop helped stimulate Canadian collaboration to encourage and support new aquaculture farms. The promoted aquaculture model is based on farming modules that allow an annual production of 130 to 150 tons of salmonids. The exchanges in Toronto will likely help new family aquaculture farms see the light of day, including by helping develop industry specifications. To ensure its growth, the Québec aquaculture sector must respond to the same challenges faced by the industry in the rest of Canada: the skilled labour shortage, limited access to veterinary care, environmental issues, technical and economic studies to support small business funding and studies to confirm the environmental effectiveness of RASs.

This event was an opportunity for MAPAQ to create interprovincial links that could help support the sustainable development of Québec's freshwater aquaculture. MAPAQ's expertise could be leveraged in future collaboration with other provinces, especially regarding environmental regulations.



Second session: Designing a RAS model farm.  
© Credit : Steve Naylor, DFO

## A DEMONSTRATOR TO IMPROVE SAFETY ON LOBSTER BOATS

By **Jérémie Persant**,  
Direction des analyses et des politiques des pêche et aquaculture

In February 2022, a Merinov team, made up of Colin Gauthier-Barrette and Michel Tremblay, showcased Merinov's lobster boat deck demonstrator to a group of Îles-de-la-Madeleine fishing industry representatives. Developed over several years, the demonstrator is the end product of a design that sought to improve lobster boat safety.

Merinov completed several steps before finalizing the demonstrator. For example, it published two studies in 2014 and 2018<sup>1</sup> in partnership with the Institut de recherche Robert-Sauvé en santé et en sécurité du travail (IRSST). These studies helped identify risk factors on lobster boats and design a layout with on-board security improvements. This work was led by the IRSST's Sylvie Montreuil and Jean-Guy Richard, and by Merinov's Francis Coulombe and Michel Tremblay.

In order to transpose the results of the studies into something more concrete, Merinov then carried out a project to build a lobster boat deck following the studies' recommendations. The demonstrator was built on a trailer to make it easy to transport and to show it to as many people as possible. It has been



Figure 1. Photograph of the lobster demonstrator. © Credit : Merinov

showcased several times since it was built, including at the 2018 meeting of the Comité permanent sur la sécurité des bateaux de pêche du Québec in Rimouski. The demonstrator was also exhibited at several Îles-de-la-Madeleine wharfs this year.

The demonstrator has been very well received by harvesting sector stakeholders and will be used in future deck layout improvement projects. The effort to take the fishing specificities of different regions into account was particularly appreciated. The demonstrator was placed on the starboard side for the Îles-de-la-Madeleine and on the port side for other marine regions. This distinction is primarily explained by the fact that Îles-de-la-Madeleine lobster fishing takes place off the coast.

MAPAQ provided financial support for this project in order to help improve safety on fishing boats, as recommended in the 2018–2025 commercial fishing and aquaculture industry ministerial action plan.

<sup>1</sup> IRSST 2014, Overboard falls of crew members on Québec lobster boats – Risk analysis and prevention solutions: <https://www.irsst.qc.ca/en/publications-tools/publication/i/100768/n/chute-par-dessus-bord-homardiers-r-831>.

IRSST 2018, Critères d'aménagement sécuritaire et ergonomique des postes de haleur et de support à casiers » des homardiens du Québec: <https://www.irsst.qc.ca/en/publications-tools/publication/i/100768/n/chute-par-dessus-bord-homardiers-r-831>.



Figure 2. Photograph of the lobster demonstrator. © Credit : Merinov

## MAPAQ'S REGIONAL BRANCH IS AT YOUR SERVICE!

Are you in need of financial assistance to undertake a project or would you like to know if you are eligible for a program? Would you like to fill out a form or do you have questions? Your regional branch is at your service!

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